



Milwaukee County

Supervisor Elizabeth M. Coggs, 10th District

Chair, Finance & Audit Committee

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OPEN AND INCLUSIVE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE BUDGET PROCESS

Supervisor Weishan points fingers, failed to roll up sleeves and work with Supervisors

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Supervisor Elizabeth M. Coggs released the following statement in response to Supervisor Weishan's comments regarding the 2010 Budget process:

“Over the summer, the actions of the Finance & Audit Committee helped avoid the layoff of 300 employees as well as stall the push for a 35-hour workweek. Two weeks ago, the Committee played a major advocacy role that led to the County Executive's decision to reverse course on his proposal to lay off 180 workers. The dialogue that Chairman Holloway and I had with the County Executive was clearly fruitful and effective. Our special Committee meeting prompted the County Executive to work with us in finding additional cost savings measures, and we are meeting on a weekly basis to identify these savings opportunities while preserving programs, services and jobs.

“Under my leadership, this Committee has worked harder than any previous Finance Committee in the recent history of Milwaukee County. Not only have I been articulate and well versed on all subject matters, I have also stood up for people and been a voice of advocacy to ensure programs, services and jobs have been kept in place. It is unfortunate that Supervisor Weishan is blaming me for the 150 calls he received against a wheel tax, an issue that he ended up voted against at the budget adoption meeting on Monday. This is a democracy and it's important to hear from our constituents on all issues. Their voices should not be suppressed.

“During the budget process, several Supervisors commented that we held the most inclusive and open Finance & Audit Committee budget meetings ever. No Supervisor was denied a chance to address the Committee. Public input was also a priority. We got started early by hosting four listening sessions in all four corners of the County in September. We wanted to get as much public input as possible before the budget was even presented to us. We also did daily “Budget Blasts” detailing the work on the budget as we progressed. We also have a Finance & Audit Committee Facebook group.

“Supervisor Weishan was never denied the opportunity to present amendments to the Committee. I also met with him individually to discuss his ideas. He did not indicate that he had any problems with our budget proceedings. Ideally, he should have sat down with me to discuss his concerns rather than creating a public spectacle that has no substance.

“Unfortunately, Supervisor Weishan is blaming me for the turbulent fiscal times affecting every government, businesses, world stock markets, banks, car dealers and families. As hard as we have worked on the 2010 County Budget, Supervisor Weishan is trying to escape by sitting on the sidelines and pointing fingers. Instead, he should get more involved in the process, roll up his sleeves and work with us to make Milwaukee County Government better.”

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